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## REMODELING THE COMMONPLACE HOME.

BY EDWARD LEE YOUNG, ARCHITECT.



As the world progresses ideas of beauty or utility which fascinated a bygone generation become wholly unsuited to the habits and tastes of the succeeding one, by reason of the universal development of humanity. In the matter of home building and home decoration there is a continual progress of artistic ideas, which ever seeks to make the environment of the individual a more artistic and therefore a more desirable accompaniment of our expanding civilization. The beauty

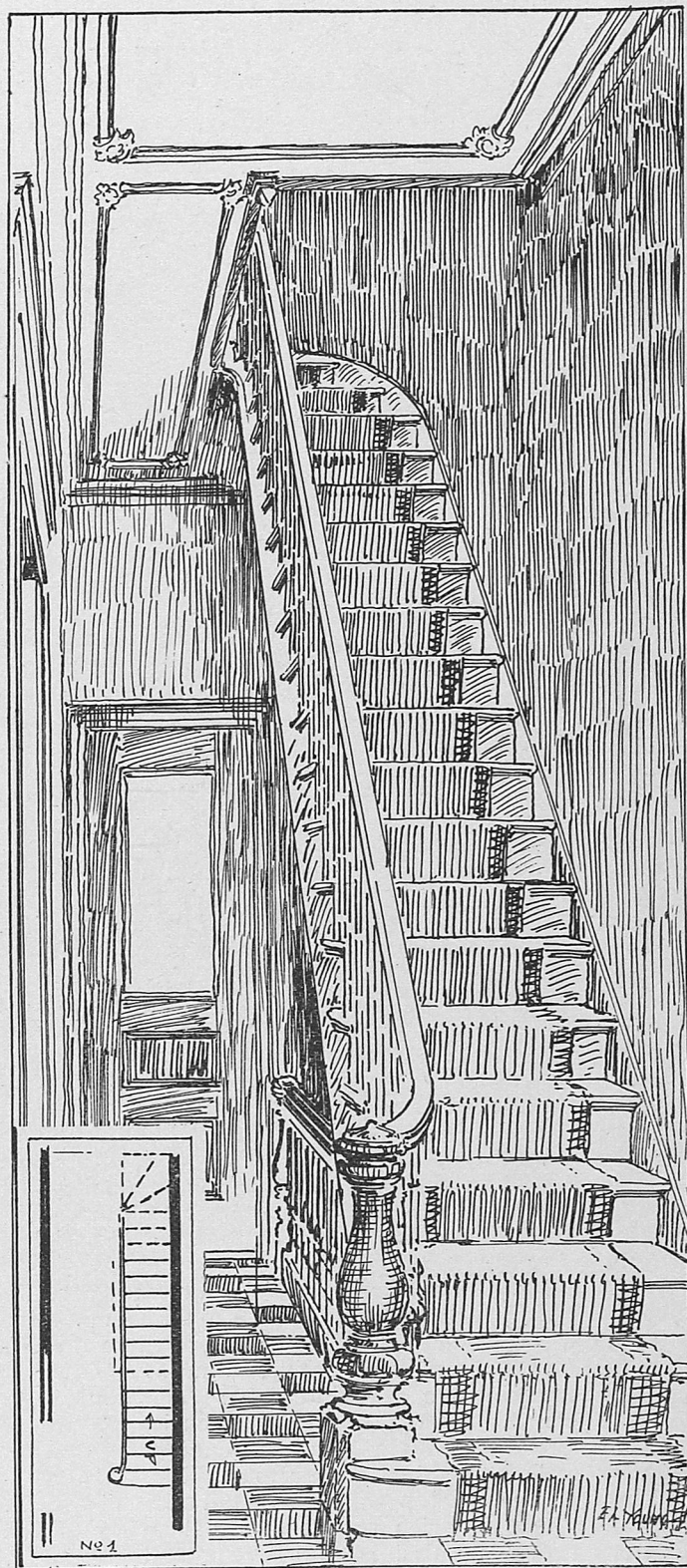
of homes of the most modern construction is based not only on our experience with the use of the materials employed, tending to a more stable construction, but, over and above this, the aim of our artists is to give a more complete satisfaction to the newer aspirations of the age; hence in the development of art industry there is exhibited an originality of invention, a charm of form and color, and a fantasy of effect that distinguishes the best contemporary work.

When we compare the rows, blocks and miles of high-stoop brown-stone houses in New York City which were considered the finest kind of domestic architecture twenty-five years ago, with the highly individualized, solidly-constructed and artistically-decorated dwellings of the present day, the dreary monotony of such habitations becomes apparent. There are hundreds of streets in this city in which the houses more resemble factories or tenements than fit residences for people of the present generation of artistic enlightenment. One house exactly resembles another, like peas in a pod, in the design and characterless coloring of the stone exterior, and the daily intercourse with the too well-known interior spaces, spots and shapes make such commonplace homes a large factor in leveling the individuality of the owners or inmates.

The nervous strain that accompanies modern business life is aggravated rather than soothed by the inartistic character of such dwellings, which, to a large extent, belong to an age of artistic pretense. The unfortunate selection of a brown stone, which we slice so easily into a veneer for the face of the house, however well it looks when new, soon becomes a source of great trouble as each year the elements crumble it into dust. The steps of the stoop crack and flake off, and large patches of stone fall from the walls.

That such constructions were once the standard of excellence from which large and small copies were made has given us endless examples of them; and while repetition in the abstract gives repose, it cannot be said that the repetition of such houses bestows much repose upon their present owners. The front door reminds us of the black walnut era with aggressive emphasis, and two doors are made to occupy the space where one ought to be. Entering the hall we encounter the ladder-like staircase, which starts as near the door as possible, and, with a straight run, lands with a quarter turn on the second floor. As to the apartments, many of which are dark, owing to the tunnel-like arrangement of the various floors, the woodwork is usually black walnut, the walls being generally painted in a hideous gray color, and overhead hydrocephalic plastic relief in the form of trusses supporting the cornice, and an overgrown circular decoration on the ceiling, oppresses the eye.

It is safe to say that the majority of owners of houses of this description, while unable to materially alter the exterior of their sterile abodes, would gladly remodel the interior with a charm of the most modern decorative art, if they only knew how to go about it. "I have no idea of art, but I know what pleases me," is the remark of thousands when spoken of regarding the remodeling of their homes. This is a meaningless reply and quite unnecessary, for everyone in these days of development can train the eye to know and like artistic things. THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER is published for this express purpose, and by studying its pages one can learn to distinguish between what is good and bad in matters of taste and style.



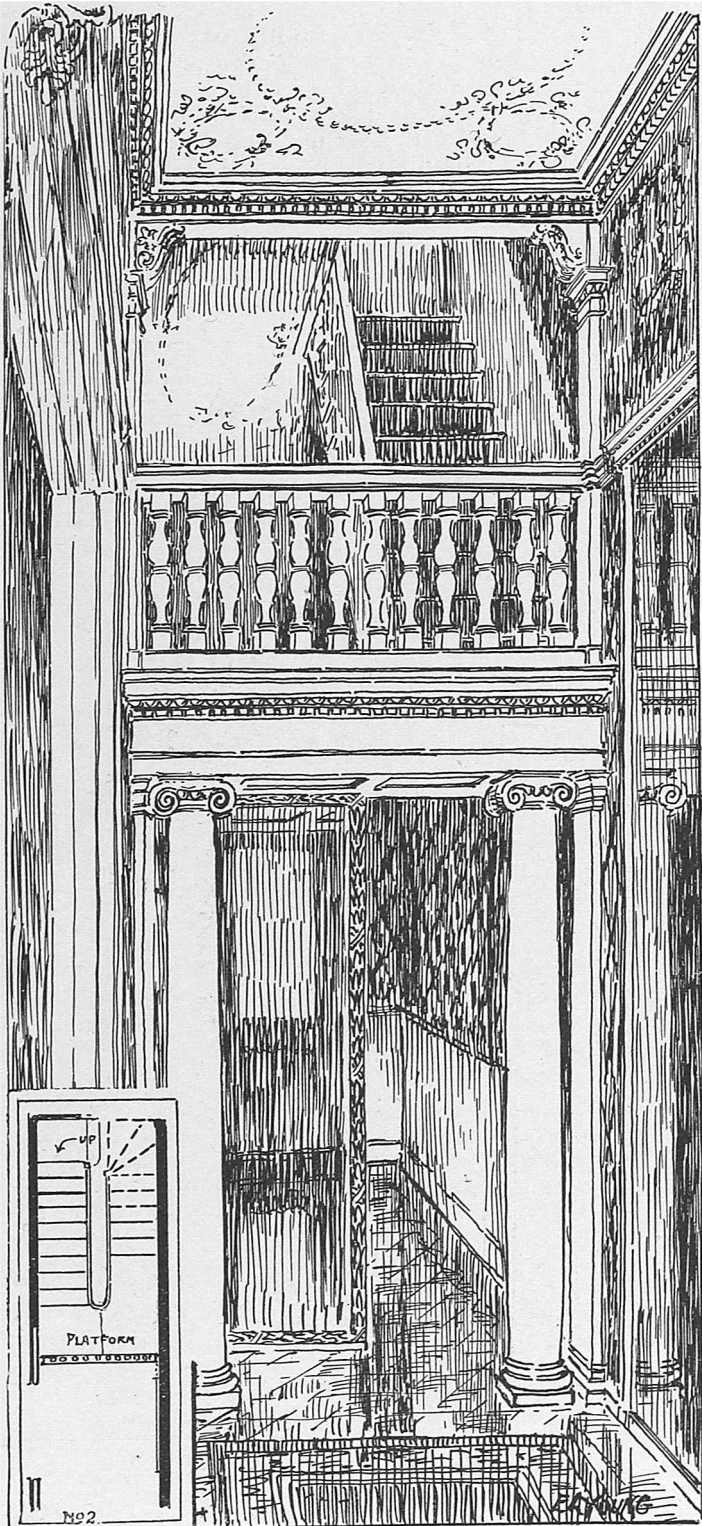
HALLWAY BEFORE BEING REMODELED.

The subject of Remodeling Commonplace Homes is one that presents the largest field of operation at the present time for the architect and artistic decorator. The unhappy owners of thousands upon thousands of city dwellings similar to those referred to, all over this broad country, are plagued to know just what to do in the way of interior changes to make their dwellings keep pace, to a certain extent, with the advancement of science and art that has taken place within the last quarter of a century; and it is our aim to establish a department of Remodeling and Alteration for the purpose of solving the many decorative problems involved in so important a subject, with a view of illustrating what may be done in this direction.

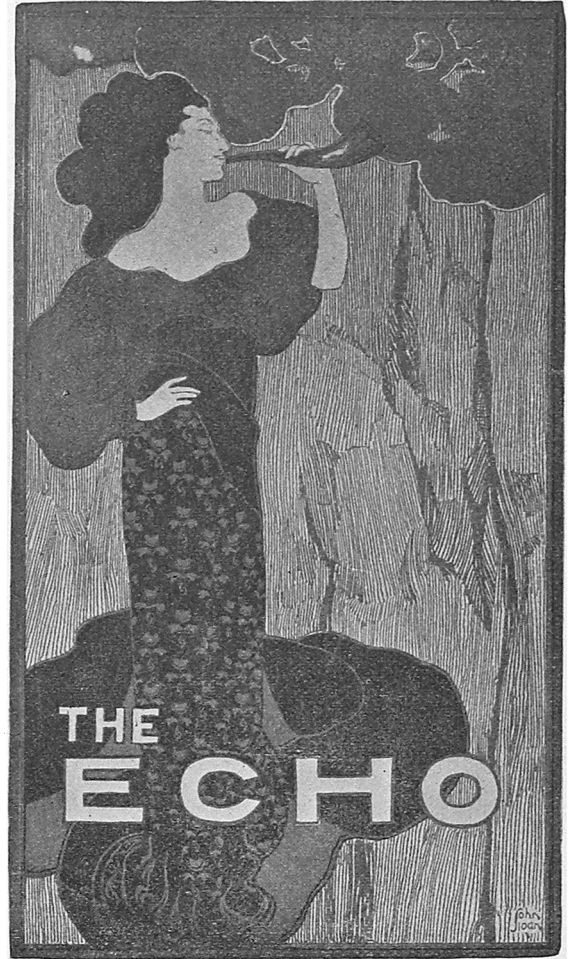
We show in sketch No. 1, herewith, a view of the hallway in the average New York dwelling, with its conventional staircase, and in sketch No. 2 show the same hallway remodeled in such a manner as to produce a pleasing and

artistic effect. The ceiling of such a hallway is generally lofty, measuring thirteen feet six inches in the clear, and we have taken advantage of this fact to make the landing or platform across the hall high enough from the floor to permit one to walk under it, while the last run of the stairs remains as originally constructed. This platform is reached by a new flight of stairs from the hall floor on the other side of the hall. This is concealed by a bulkhead construction on which a mirror is placed, reflecting and enlarging the front hall. It will be seen from the sketch that the problem of remodeling the ladder-like stair case has been happily solved in a manner in harmony with contemporary ideas and without great cost.

The color effect contemplates the use of ivory enamel on the woodwork, contrasting with which the walls and draperies should be in dark rich colors. These strong contrasts are favorable in halls by reason of their decorative strength. This treatment need not be expensive, as the



SAME HALLWAY AFTER BEING REMODELED.



THE ECHO POSTER. BY JOHN SLOAN.

material will not cost much beyond the labor of getting the work out and putting it in place. The result is one that is certain to give a great deal of satisfaction to the owner of the house. The finished work is a material amelioration of the former hard, sterile hallway, and in such play of invention the personality of the individual receives fresh inspiration, the primitive idea being developed by one that is more elaborate, and certainly much more artistic.

Later on we will publish and illustrate other ideas for remodeling the hallway, as well as articles on remodeling and altering the various apartments of the house.

#### THE AMERICAN POSTER.



THE American Poster is an interesting study from the decorative as well as the artistic standpoint, as the best artist-designers of the present time have interested themselves and vied with each other in bringing about many satisfactory results in this peculiar field.

For simplicity of outline and motive and the artistic use of a few colors only, these designs are, as a rule, more clearly decorative in their effects than the work of their Parisian brothers. This probably may

be accounted for by the fact of their following a course midway between the English school, which is, as a rule, severely conventional, and that of the French artist, who aims more at purely artistic effects, and the results obtained are, without question, successful.

It would seem reasonable that the semi-conventional type of the Poster is better adapted to its peculiar use—that of an advertising medium—on account of its simple and clear-cut character, as such work more quickly catches the eye and